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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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AND THE PACIFIC

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HOMELAND SECURITY, AND INVESTIGATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COURTS,
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, AND THE INTERNET

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS
RANKING MEMBER

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 20, 2018

The Honorable Trey Gowdy
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Chairman Brady, Chairman Gowdy,
Ranking Member Neal, and Ranking Member Cummings:

In the wake of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, the American people have shown the highest level of support for strengthening America's gun laws in decades. Recent reports have indicated that the National Rifle Association of America (NRA) has dramatically increased its online advertisements to influence this urgent national debate and frustrate any efforts to make our communities safer that may also negatively impact gun sales. Unfortunately, some of this activity has included mocking and attacking my constituents, the student-survivors of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Beyond this outrageous and mean-spirited behavior, serious questions arise as to whether the NRA's political activity is inappropriately funded by foreign donations. Senator Ron Wyden, Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, questioned the NRA's internal policies in correspondences with John C. Frazer, Secretary and General Counsel of the NRA (attached).

According to news reports, both the Federal Election Commission and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have opened investigations into possible improper donations to the NRA from Russian nationals that were used to support Donald Trump's presidential campaign in 2016. The NRA's responses to Senator Wyden have shifted over the past three months, revealing multiple

donations from Russian nationals and residents, including contributions from Alexander Torshin, who was recently sanctioned by the United States.

The potential use of foreign donations for NRA political activities intended to sway the gun violence policy debate in its favor is troubling. Today marks 19 years since the massacre at Columbine High School, another tragedy on an American calendar dotted with mass shootings in our schools, our movie theaters, our churches, at concerts, at our workplaces, and in our streets. In roughly the time since the Columbine shooting, the National Rifle Association has spent a total of \$203.2 million on political activities, including: \$144.3 million in outside expenditures, \$45.9 million in lobbying, \$11.4 million in candidate contributions, and \$1.68 million in contributions to political parties and leadership PACs. Congress cannot sit by while gun corporations use their profits to pour millions of dollars into elections to stop progress toward common-sense gun laws.

I share Ranking Member Wyden's concerns. In light of the NRA's refusal to provide additional information to clarify its responses to Senator Wyden's specific questions regarding the sources of donations to various funds used for political activity, the disclosure or non-disclosure of those sources, the transfer of funds among various accounts, and the use of various NRA accounts to pay for political activities, it is clear that Congress must conduct its own investigations. The oversight of the NRA's political activities, its foreign contributors, and the broader issues of abuse of tax-exempt status and compliance with disclosure requirements fall within the jurisdiction of your committees.

I urge the Committees on Ways and Means and Oversight and Government Reform each schedule hearings to examine these issues. Your attention to these matters is necessary to protect our elections from foreign influence, end the undue influence of dark money, and stop potentially improper political activities intended to stop much needed congressional action to stop gun violence.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Deutch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ted" and last name "Deutch" clearly legible.

Ted Deutch
MEMBER OF CONGRESS